

ORIGINAL
United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0004

November 15, 1999

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Sheryl J. Wilkerson
Director, Office of Legislative Affairs
The Federal Communications Commission
Room 808
1919 M Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

INQUIRY FROM: National Organization for Women

RE: The FCC's role in establishing public broadcasting guidelines

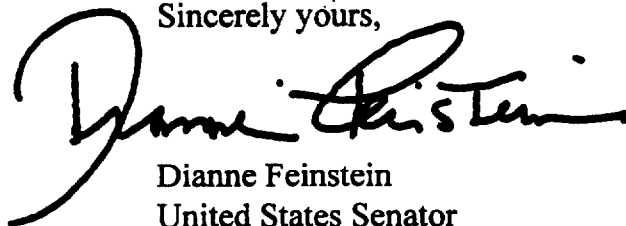
Dear Ms. Wilkerson:

I am forwarding the attached constituent inquiry for your review and consideration. I believe that my constituent would benefit from your response to the specific issues raised in the enclosed letter.

I would appreciate it if you would return your response, in duplicate, to my Washington, D.C. office as quickly as possible so that I can share the information with my constituent.

With warmest personal regards.

Sincerely yours,


Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

DF:re

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National Organization for Women, Inc.

733 15th Street, NW, 2nd Fl., Washington, DC 20005 (202) 628-8669 FAX (202) 785-8576

September 25, 1999

Honorable Dianne Feinstein
331 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-0504

Dear Honorable Feinstein:

Television plays an important and powerful role in my community, and I am concerned about the lack of positive images of women, the dearth of public interest programming that addresses women's needs and the influence of television programming on children. Women and people of color have never had truly equal access to the airwaves, and television programming is filled with harmful and negative images and stereotypes of women.

The airwaves are a public trust, yet Congress has given exclusive control of those airwaves to major corporations for free. In return, broadcasters are supposed to act in the public interest; but this has never happened. I understand that television broadcasters in major cities across the United States began implementing the use of digital television signals on May 1, 1999. I want to know what responsibilities broadcasters will be required to assume in exchange for the free use of our airwaves.

Broadcasters have urged the FCC to issue voluntary guidelines regarding their public interest obligations. The public deserves mandatory broadcasting obligations. I respectfully request that Congress require the FCC to convene hearings to hear from those of us who are concerned about women's images in the media and our access to the airwaves. We should expect something substantial in return for giving away such vast public resources.

Sincerely,

Helen Grieco
Sacramento, CA
National Board Member
National Organization for Women

Copies:
National Organization for Women Headquarters
FCC Chair William Kennard
Representative Robert Matsui
Senator Barbara Boxer